

Policeman to Face Wiretapping Trial

By Saul Kohler

Special to The Washington Post

HARRISBURG, Pa., May 7—The former Detective Commander of the Pennsylvania State Police will stand trial Tuesday on charges of breaking the law to uphold the law.

Maj. Willard J. Stanton, 26-year veteran of the State Police, is accused of issuing an illegal order to a subordinate and of making improper purchases of wiretapping equipment.

He is also charged with insubordination for standing mute before questions of his superior officer, even though the interrogation took place one week after Gov. William W. Scranton had ordered him tried.

The court-martial will be closed. It will be held in the library at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy, within sniffing distance of the chocolate factory at Hershey. It is noteworthy for these reasons:

1. Stanton is the highest-ranking trooper ever court-martialed by the organization.

2. At stake is not only his own reputation, but that of the force itself since he has been charged with ordering a detective to violate the 1957 Pennsylvania law that forbids the interception of telephone communications by anyone, including the police.

3. The scandal has resulted in the resignation of former Commissioner E. Wilson Purdy and has become the leading issue in the Pennsylvania gubernatorial campaign.

A probable major court test was averted when the State Police and State Department of Justice agreed last week that members of the legislative committee before whom the disclosures were made would not be

served with subpoenas, but merely would be "invited" to testify.

Gov. Scranton had choked off the legislative hearings by forbidding state employees to go before the committee soon after Det. Angelo Caracci had testified that he tapped telephones under Stanton's orders.

Members of the legislature, especially Democrats, had threatened to reciprocate by refusing to appear in answer to subpoenas from an executive department.

The Major has yet to make a public statement. He took the 5th Amendment 77 times when he appeared before the committee.

Caracci also is scheduled to undergo trial by court-martial early in June, but no specifications have been drawn as yet.

The maximum penalty that can be imposed on Stanton by the Board of three captains is dismissal from the force. He also could be suspended, or reduced in rank.

Should he be found innocent, he would be restored to his \$12,075-a-year post. He was suspended on April 15.